

Agency : FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Title : Cable Television Horizontal and Vertical Ownership Limits

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Cable television horizontal and vertical ownership limits

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Comment : Telecommunications, cable television and power companies comprise the businesses that are fundamental to growth and maintenance of our information infrastructure. Given our growing reliance as a society, an economy and a political system on the electronic processing and exchange of information, we must be ever vigilant in preventing monopolization.

Monopolization is an inherent danger in a free economy. The concentration of resources, whether natural or manufactured, product or service, results in power and wealth concentrated in the hands of a single person or a few. This can severely limit economic opportunity for the many, having the effect of transforming a free economy into restricted one -- an economy without competition.

Short of nationalization, the fix for containing the monopolist is regulation.

Cable television system monopolization is of special concern. Cable TV is part of our country's information infrastructure, serving to provide people access to information, essential to our democracy. Regulations that protect our information infrastructure from circumstances and practices that could undermine the free flow of information and a multiplicity of voices secure our way of life.

The 30% rule limiting cable television companies from serving more than a greater percentage of the total subscribers is just the kind of regulation that serves to protect our free economy from the monopolists and the threat they pose to our liberty and pursuit of happiness.

